

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Tuesday, January 22, 2002, 7:00 p.m.

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 22, 2002, 7:00 p.m., at the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina. (The meeting was changed from Monday to Tuesday due to Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.)

Present were Vice Chair Marie H. Huffman, and Commissioners Katherine W. Barnes, Barbara G. Beatty, and Dan A. Hunsucker.

Absent: Chairman W. Steve Ikerd.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Deputy County Manager Steven D. Wyatt, Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Staff Attorney Debra N. Bechtel, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

1. Vice Chair Huffman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Vice Chair Huffman offered the invocation.
3. Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular and closed sessions of Monday, December 17, 2001, and special session and closed session of Wednesday, January 2, 2002. The motion carried unanimously.
4. Special Guests:

Vice Chair Huffman recognized Dr. Duane Kirkman, Superintendent, Hickory Public Schools; and Sarah Talbert, Chairman, Hickory Board of Education; and Retired Sheriff's Major Joe Momier, and his wife Lynette. Vice Chair Huffman welcomed Mr. Kim Gilliland, replacing Ms. Vickie Greene as the *Hickory Daily Record* reporter.

5. Presentations:
 - a. Mr. Scott Millar, President, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation introduced Judy and Jay Tate from Benco Steel, Inc. Mr. Millar said Benco Steel, Inc. received the North Carolina Small Business of the Year award for 2001 for overcoming adversity, challenging the ordinary models of business, establishing business practices above the usual, and for improving the overall business climate of Catawba County.

Vice Chair Huffman presentation a Certificate of Commendation to Benco Steel, Inc. and Judy Tate, President, Benco Steel, Inc. accepted.

Ms. Tate recognized several of Benco Steel, Inc. vice presidents: Janice Elliott, administration and purchasing; Ron Borders, plant operations; Carrie Collins, sales and marketing; and her husband, executive vice president Jay Tate. Ms. Tate said they were proud to receive the certificate from the Board of Commissioners. She thanked her employees. She said the ability in the Unifour to train the workforce in the traditional skills that has brought wealth to the region in the past has been a key factor in the region's past success. The big challenge is to develop and offer training opportunities that will be required to provide a knowledgeable workforce for the new non-traditional businesses and industries seeking new regions for growth and opportunity. She said new growth is the lifeblood and Benco Steel wants to serve a growing customer community.

- b. Presentation of Outstanding County Program Award, being given to the County for the Department of Social Services' Work and Ride Program.

Vice Chair Huffman assisted Mr. Todd McGee, Director of Publications, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners in presenting an award to Karen M. Heffner, WorkFirst Program Manager.

Ms. Heffner received the award for the Department of Social Services Work and Ride Program. She said the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministries, Social Services, and the county's faith community designed the program to connect donated, roadworthy vehicles with low-income families who need reliable transportation to seek or maintain employment. A mechanic, at no cost to the donor, checks out the vehicles. The Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry receives and stores the vehicles until they are awarded to a selected family. A selection committee conducts a screening process on all applicants to ensure the program's goals are met. The applicants must show financial need, prove transportation is a significant barrier to maintaining employment, have a valid North Carolina driver's license and a good driving record, and must commit to attending a budgeting and basic car repair class. She said in 1999 they accepted the first vehicle and since then has accepted and awarded over 35 vehicles.

6. Special guests not listed on agenda:

a. Mr. Paul Carter, Sherrills Ford.

Mr. Carter, President, Concerned Citizens Of Lake Norman said he had questions relating to the county's plans to build a wastewater treatment facility on Slanting Bridge Road in Sherrills Ford. He said he was aware the county has put this project on temporary hold due to budget reasons. He asked the following five questions. He said the board could provide a written response back to him.

1. What is the current status of this planned facility and has the county taken any actions whatsoever since placing these plans on hold?

2. In light of Mecklenburg County losing a lawsuit with South Carolina for the dumping of improperly treated wastewater into the Catawba River Basin, has the county undertaken due diligence to understand how this impacts the planned Sherrills Ford facility?

3. Again with respect to the Mecklenburg County situation and the \$42 million dollars needed to upgrade 5 facilities....that is \$42 million as in \$8 million per facility....what financial impacts has Catawba County estimated this will have on the plans for the Sherrills Ford facility?

4. Based on the problems and finger-pointing occurring with the Sailview subdivision in Lincoln County, what accommodations are being planned by Catawba County since the Sherrills Ford area will require the same system designs as Lincoln County?

5. What changes are being implemented in Catawba County due to the environmental impact agreements being implemented for the Palisades development on Lake Wylie in Mecklenburg County?

Vice Chair Huffman said she did not know what was happening in Mecklenburg County. She requested that Mr. Carter provide a written copy of his questions, which he provided, and she said the Board would provide a written response.

7. Appointments:

Catawba County Planning Board

Vice Chair Huffman said Chairman Ikerd recommended the reappointments of Paul B. Beatty, Jr. and Edward Charles Neill for three-year terms, which will expire December 31, 2005.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

Commissioner Barnes recommended the appointment of Ms. Sandi Fotheringham to fill the unexpired term of Jane Hitchcock. Term expires January 31, 2003. Ms. Barnes also appointed Rick Vandett for a two-year term, replacing Dr. Kirkman. Term will expire January 31, 2004.

Catawba County Criminal Partnership Advisory

Commissioner Hunsucker recommended the appointment of Nathan Poovey of Sigmon, Sigmon, Isenhour & Poovey to replace Leslie Yount as a Defense Attorney representative for a three-year term. Term expires June 30, 2004.

Vice Chair Huffman made a motion to approve the aforementioned appointments. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent agenda:

The following items were grouped as the Consent Agenda and were presented by County Manager J. Thomas Lundy. No member of the Board asked for separate consideration.

a. Request for Fund Balance by Hickory Rescue Squad.

The current 1985 crash truck services the Vale, Mt. View and Propst areas as well as provides back up response to the Hickory area. There have been major problems with this truck during the past two years with the steering system, brakes, wiring and generator systems. Within the last several months when Hickory Rescue has responded with this vehicle, the unit experienced small engine fires, vehicle failures which has caused Hickory Rescue to have the vehicle towed back to their station, and at times was barely controllable on responses. Thus far this has not caused any major problems while responding to calls but the liability has greatly increased. Hickory Rescue has spent over \$1,000 trying to solve the crash truck mechanical problems, without success. The problems still remain. Hickory Rescue has entered into a contract with Chiefs Fire and Rescue for a demonstration unit they had built. Total cost of the unit is \$67,000. This unit is a four door F-550 cab with a rescue body with all electrical equipment in place. The unit will allow Hickory Rescue to provide service to a rapidly growing area of the County and replace a unit that has major mechanical problems. As of January 2001, their fund balance totaled \$26,863.66 that consists of savings they have accumulated over proceeding years. In the 1997-98 budget year, county management and the rescue association decided that funds unspent from capital budgets of each squad would be maintained in a fund balance for that squad until those funds were utilized. All capital funds unspent beginning in the 1998-99 budget would go to a general pool fund for future projects of rescue squads. These funds would be under the direction of the rescue association and each squad would be able to apply to the association for funding from this pool. The association would make a recommendation to the county for the use of these funds through an effective plan. This action will close out Hickory Rescue's fund balance account.

Fund Balance
240-260250-690100

Fund Balance Applied
240-260250-866500

The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the remainder of Hickory Rescue Squad's Fund Balance of \$26,863.66 be released to be used for reimbursement of the purchase of a 2001 Crash Rescue Truck to replace a 1985 Crash Rescue Truck.

b. Mental Health Budget Revision.

Additional revenues are from \$157,331 in State funds (DD Waiting List \$2,480, Adult MH \$34,490 and MR/MI \$120,361) and Medicaid (\$220,000) dollars.

This revision reconciles the current budget with actual State funding allocations, which were just received in November. Additional State dollars include:

- a small consumer-specific increase in DD Waiting List funds
- a one-time grant for a special project at Connections which will expand the consumer employment opportunities in that program
- an increase in the DD Diversion Funds allocated to Frye Regional Medical Center for the MR/MI unit there.

Increased Medicaid collections (\$220,000) are a direct response to increased demand for services provided through private service providers who draw Medicaid funds through this agency. A separate line-item is created in the budget for displaying these dollars to more easily monitor collections.

No additional County funding is requested and no new positions are requested.

Supplemental Appropriations

Account Number		Account Number	
110 533001		110 533001	
911420 DD Services	74,904	635680 DD Waiting List Fds	(25,042)

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911425 Waiting List Svcs	(42,424)	635690 DD Services	27,522
915570 Medicaid Services	<u>120,000</u>	672151 Contract Medicaid	<u>150,000</u>
	152,480		152,480
110 533201		110 533201	
911350 MR/MI Services	120,361	633209 MR/MI Funds	120,361
110 531031		110 531031	
XXXXXX Work Project	34,490	6351XX AMH Spec Proj	34,490
110 532001		110 532001	
915570 Medicaid Services	70,000	672151 Contract Medicaid	70,000

The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the Mental Health Board's request to increase the current budget by a net \$377,331 bringing it to \$16,099,446.

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

End Consent Agenda

9. Departmental Reports:

a. Facilities:

1. Supplemental Appropriation – Hickory Public Schools.

Mr. Michael S. Talbert, Facilities Director, said the boiler at the Administrative Services Building is leaking and needs replacing. The boiler can no longer be repaired and is near failing. A new boiler will cost \$34,000 and improve the efficiency of the heating system. There are no immediate plans to move the administrative offices of Hickory Public Schools from its current location. This is an emergency replacement and can't wait until the regular budget cycle. He said Bus No. 818 that serves Catawba Valley High School is the oldest bus in the fleet. The bus is leaking oil and there is concern the engine will fail. A new bus will cost \$53,500 if ordered now, combined with new buses ordered for Catawba County Schools. The Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners appropriate \$87,500 from Schools Capital Projects Fund Balance for the replacement of the boiler at the Administrative Services Building and to replace a bus that serves Catawba Valley High School.

Supplemental Appropriation:

Revenues:

420-750050-690100	Fund Balance Applied	\$87,500
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Expenditures:

420-750100-865200-32150-4-05	School Bus	\$53,500
420-750100-865200-32150-3-09	Boiler – Admin Ser Bldg	\$34,000

Vice Chair Huffman asked if there would be a trade in on the bus. Dr. Kirkman said the old bus would be taken out of service.

Commissioner Barnes asked about the timeframe for moving the administrative offices to the College Park Middle School facility and how does that interface with the expenditure to repair the boiler?

Dr. Kirkman said relocating the administrative offices is in the long-range plan but their first priority is the new middle school, then renovations at Hickory High School, and then a new elementary school. He said they anticipate some time in accomplishing those tasks. Moving the administrative offices will take place after the other tasks have taken place.

Commissioner Barnes asked about the cost of renovating the College Park facility? Dr. Kirkman said the cost estimate in 2000 for over 8,000 square feet of new construction was \$760,000 and total renovation was \$1.3 million. They were looking towards \$2 million for that renovation.

Commissioner Barnes asked what was the projected use for the existing administrative offices? Dr. Kirkman said that was so far out, approximately 10-12 years, they would have to wait until they get much closer before they would have a serious plan as to how to use that facility.

Dr. Kirkman requested and was granted a moment of personal privilege. He said on the 14th of January the school board held a press conference announcing the kick off for "More at Four." The three school systems in conjunction with a partnership know as Smart Start secured funding for three of those classes. They were among the first 12 counties in the state. He said he mentioned at the press conference that 10 years ago the Board of Education came before the Board of Commissioners asking for facilities and subsequently came before the Board again on other projects. He said they started with Viewmont School to have space for pre-kindergarten programs, and at that time there were folks who wondered if that was something the Board of Education should be looking at. He thanked the Board of Commissioners for the faith it had in the Board of Education and support the Board of Commissioners has given because the existence of those types of facilities helps secure programs when the funding becomes available.

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to appropriate \$87,500 from Schools Capital Projects Fund Balance for the replacement of the boiler at the Administrative Services Building and to replace a bus that serves Catawba Valley High School. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Informal Bids – Bakers Mountain Park.

Mr. Michael S. Talbert, Facilities Director, said Catawba County has planned for a Park on Bakers Mountain since 1989, the year the 196-acre tract was purchased. Bakers Mountain Park represents the opportunity to preserve a piece of natural history that stands above all citizens of Catawba County. The Park will alleviate the growing demand for passive recreational opportunities in a region that is rapidly developing and is facing greater challenges to provide the services wanted by our 141,000 citizens. The first public meeting on the proposed Bakers Mountain Park was held on January 30, 1997. Over 40 residents attended that first meeting showing overwhelming support for a new park. On May 15, 2000, the County received notification from the State of North Carolina that we were approved for a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant. The Grant is for \$165,950 matched with \$165,950 of County funds. The environmental assessment for the Park was completed December 1, 2000, and approved by the State on January 29, 2001. On February 7, 2001, the County executed the PARTF Project Agreement for Bakers Mountain Park, with the promise of funding as soon as the agreement was executed. A check for \$165,950 was received from PARTF on March 19, 2001. He said with the State Budget crisis, and uncertainty concerning the County's 2001/2002 budget, planning and construction was not started immediately. On June 21, 2001 a second public meeting was held at the Southwest Branch Library with 56 residents attending. Residents voicing their opinions offered support for the park with interest and concern about the various amenities that would be available. Hiking trails, picnic areas, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails were all mentioned as desirable amenities by the residents. Horseback riding is the only activity that is not a good fit for Bakers Mountain, due to the steep terrain. Mr. Talbert said staff has worked with the City of Morganton to adapt plans they designed for restrooms and a park ranger's office for the Catawba River Greenway, see the attached photo. McGill & Associates, also the firm responsible for Riverbend Park, has designed Bakers Mountain Park. Staff and prison labor have been responsible for much of the grading and site preparation for the park. The project will be completed utilizing our own staff, prison labor and competitive bidding.

Bakers Mountain Park will include the following:

1. Access road and parking for 25 vehicles.
2. Barrier free trail, paved 1400 liner feet.

3. Woodlands trails, 14,600 liner feet.
4. Restroom facility/rangers office.
5. Picnic facility & tables.

The following informal bids were received on December 14, 2001, for the construction of a ranger's office and restroom facility including a well and septic system at Bakers Mountain Park: Moss-Marlow Building Co., Inc. - \$93,895; Wilkie Construction Co., Inc. - \$105,124; Carolina Construction Co. - \$ 107,650; and Houck Contracting LLC - \$ 119,263.

Mr. Talbert said Moss-Marlow Building Co., Inc. is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder with a total bid of \$93,895. This bid is within the budget for Bakers Mountain Park. The Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the bid from Moss-Marlow Building Co., Inc.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the bid from Moss-Marlow Building Co., Inc. in the amount of \$93,895 for the construction of restrooms and a park office at Bakers Mountain Park. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Sheriff's Office:

1. Position Request for Records.

Ms. Jennifer Sumpter, Business Manager Sheriff's Office, said part of the Emergency Services Plan phased in during last fiscal year and the beginning of this fiscal year called for adding personnel to the Records Division over time to make this a 24-hour per day operation in an effort to relieve some of the workload on the Communications Center. To that end, one Deputy position was approved for fiscal year 2001/2002 with the understanding that the needs of the Records Division and Communications Center would be evaluated on an ongoing basis in preparation for the separation of the Communications Center from the Sheriff's Office. Originally two positions were planned for Records this fiscal year, but due to the budget constraints resulting from the State's budget problems and the increased Medicaid costs to the county the decision was made to only pursue one position at the beginning of the fiscal year. This individual has been extremely helpful in running criminal histories, processing warrants, and assisting with criminal backgrounds required for handgun purchase permits and concealed weapon permits. She said during the hours that the person assigned to this position is scheduled, this employee has relieved the Communications Center of the criminal history requests by officers. Experience has shown us that with all of the criminal history DCI responses now routing directly to the Records Division during the hours the Records Deputy is on duty, having someone in Records to perform this function relieves a great deal of DCI communications from the telecommunicators. In addition to the criminal history needs, the workload of the Records Division has been expanding over the past several years and will increase even more in January with recent changes to the sex offender registration and the new requirement that all law enforcement agencies in the state collect and maintain a database of traffic stop profiling information. All of these changes require a substantial amount of time and cannot be added to the already overworked staff in the Records Division. Due to the success of the first position and the growing needs of the Records Division, the Sheriff's Office requested that a second position be added at this time to address these needs. Someone is needed in the Records Division to run and respond to criminal histories 24/7. In order to have 24 hour per day coverage they would need at least 4 people working 12-hour shifts. With two people they can cover the peak times for now by assigning one Deputy to work 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the other 4:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. Additional coverage could be provided with part-time assistance on an as needed basis and/or to replace full-time on leave.

Ms. Sumpter said the Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the request for a second position to be added to the Sheriff's Office that was originally included as part of the Emergency Services Plan for this fiscal year.

Transfer of Appropriation:

From:

110-270050-849095	Enhanced EMS Services	\$18,157
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To:

110-210080-812100	Regular Wages	\$11,667
110-210080-821100	FICA	\$ 893
110-210080-822200	LEO Retirement	\$ 1,121
110-210080-823100	Group Health	\$ 2,242
110-210080-823300	Group Dental	\$ 48
110-210080-823600	Long Term Disability	\$ 58
110-210080-825500	Short Term Disability	\$ 44
110-210080-849160	Indirect Costs	\$ 2,084

Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to approve the request for a second position to be added to the Sheriff's Office that was originally included as part of the Emergency Services Plan for this fiscal year. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Attorneys' Report. None.
11. Manager's Report. None.
12. Other items of business. None.
13. Adjournment:

At 7:30 p.m., there being no further business to come before the Board, Vice Chair Huffman made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Marie H. Huffman, Vice Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Thelda B. Rhoney
County Clerk